

A student summary of WJEC GCSE Music

Unit 1: Performing – Worth 35% of your GCSE (Marked by your teacher, moderated by WJEC)

You must perform **at least 2 pieces**: One piece must be an **ensemble**, the other(s) can be ensembles or solos. You can sing or play any instrument. You can have an accompanist or use a backing track, or perform unaccompanied. Backing tracks and accompaniments must not contain the part you are playing/singing.

You must also write a **programme note** of 500-1000 to accompany one of the pieces you perform. The Quality of Written Communication will be assessed as part of this piece of work.

An ensemble in this course is described as a group of 2-8 live performers. You must not be performing the tune all the way through while the other performers accompany you. You must also be the only person performing your part.

Each piece must be recorded in the same school year you take the exam, and your **teacher must be present**. You will need to hand in a **score** or a **lead sheet** of each piece so your teacher can assess how accurately you perform. You cannot hand in an audio/video guide track instead.

Performing more difficult pieces – harder than Grade 3 standard – can boost your marks. You can perform easier pieces – below Grade 3 standard, but your marks will be scaled down a bit. Playing an easier piece well could result in a better mark than playing a harder piece badly! If your performances last less than **4 minutes** in total, you will lose marks.

Unit 2: Composing – Worth 35% of your GCSE (Marked by your teacher, moderated by WJEC)

You must **compose two original pieces** of music. Each is equally weighted. **One is a free composition**, which you can complete at any time in the course. The other must be written in response to a **brief** released by WJEC on the 1st September in the same school year as you take the exam. They can both be in a similar style as long as the actual musical content is different. You must also write a 500-1000 word **evaluation** of one of your compositions.

You will have to hand in an **audio file** of each piece – either a live recording (of you or someone else performing your piece) or an output from software. You will also need either a **score** or a **lead sheet** with a detailed description of each piece.

You have to complete a **composing log** as well which is **signed** by you and your teacher to authenticate your work. This explains how you completed your work, if you used any ideas which were not your own (like drum loops) and if anyone else helped you.

Unit 3: Appraising – Worth 30% of your GCSE (A listening exam.)

In your exam there will be **8 questions**. Each will have an **extract of music** which is played out loud for you to answer the questions on what you hear. Question 1 and question 7 will always be on the **set works**.

The questions will focus on three things:

Elements of Music – melody, harmony, tonality, form and structure, dynamics, timbre, texture, tempo, rhythm, metre.

The context – the time, place or purpose of the music

Musical Language – the list of musical terms in **Appendix C** of the specification, notes in the **treble and bass clef** and any specific **vocabulary** which goes with the set works.

Open the QR codes for more information on each Component, and here for general things to remember.